

The New Faces of Clinical Care at Tennessee's Mental Health Hospitals



*As demand
increases for
mental health care,
Psychiatric Nurse
Practitioners
are rising to the
occasion*



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As we head into a new year, it's worth reflecting on our successes in 2015. I've witnessed so many more of our neighbors and loved ones benefiting from mental health and substance abuse services through Tennessee's dedicated teams of providers and caregivers. You make such a difference in the lives of others, and we couldn't do it without you. From working with more defendants in our state's Recovery Courts to helping more homeless veterans and families find housing, employment, and treatment services, you are all making a difference.



Going into the new year, we are tackling big issues like heroin and prescription drug use in our state, and we are working to respond better and faster to those in crises and in need of mental health services. We are placing even more emphasis on prevention and early diagnosis.

Always remember, when you touch the life of just one Tennessean, you also have the potential to impact whole families and entire communities. May 2016 allow us all to build on our successes and to reach new heights in serving others.

Sincerely,

E. Douglas Varney, Commissioner

Our VISION

To be one of the nation's most innovative and proactive state behavioral health authorities for Tennesseans dealing with mental health and substance abuse problems.

Our MISSION

Provide, plan for, and promote a comprehensive array of quality prevention, early intervention, treatment, habilitation, rehabilitation and recovery support services for Tennesseans with mental illness and substance abuse issues.



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ON THE COVER

This issue features our Regional Mental Health Institutes' Psychiatric Nurse Practitioners pictured on our cover. Top row, left to right: Belinda Douglas, Melissa Mosby, and Turner Jernigan. Middle row, left to right: Holly Liter and Jennifer Wilson. Bottom row, left to right: Darcy McPherson and Keesha Reid. Read their stories starting on page 25.

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The December 2015 Statewide Planning & Policy Council meeting at Middle Tennessee Mental Health Institute in Nashville.

Statewide Planning and Policy Council Reports on 2015, Looks Forward to 2016

by Suzanne Weed, TDMHSAS Director of the Office of Planning

The Planning and Policy Council system is unique to Tennessee with none other like it in the nation. It serves to bring grass roots participation to all regions of the state.

To do this, the Tennessee Department of Mental Health & Substance Abuse Services (TDMHSAS) administers seven Regional Planning and Policy Councils. Avis Easley from the TDMHSAS Office of Planning staff serves as the Program Manager for the Council system.

Meetings are open to the public, and participation is encouraged. Approximately 350 Tennesseans participated in Regional Councils in 2015, and 53 of those were appointed to serve as Statewide members. The Statewide Council is comprised of at least 51% consumers and family members of consumers. As is true in the industry, many who work as therapists, case managers, advocates, and executives have personal experience with recovery. They are valuable members of the Council with a well-rounded and realistic view of the service delivery system. The Council also includes faith-based community members as well as ex-officio members who serve by virtue of their office.

Title 33, the mental health law in Tennessee (and also federal law), requires the Council to help plan and comment on the Department's allocation of taxpayer dollars. The Three-year Plan must be revised at least annually based on an assessment of the public need for mental health and substance use disorders services. The Council acts as an independent body; the content of deliberations and the Council's recommendations are not influenced by the Program Manager or TDMHSAS.

The needs assessment is conducted annually by the Regional Councils. This process creates a data-informed method for Regional Councils to influence the design of the mental health

and substance use service delivery system by identifying each region's needs and then targeting state resources to more effectively and efficiently meet those identified needs.

In addition to the needs assessment, the Councils also review and provide input on the federal Mental Health and Substance Abuse Block Grant funding plans, the annual budget for TDMHSAS, legislative proposals for review of the Commissioner and possible consideration by the Governor, and other departmental reports and initiatives.

In 2015, the Statewide Council achieved a quorum at every meeting and actively sought to advise the Department concerning the needs of the communities served by its membership.

Do you have an interest in the future of mental health and substance use services in Tennessee?

Planning & Policy Council meetings are open to the public. Find the meeting schedule for your region (check the website in red below) and plan to attend a Statewide Council meeting in 2016.

Learn more by visiting our website at www.tn.gov/behavioral-health/topic/planning-policy-councils

Chief Pharmacist Educates Peers in South Africa

The following article was submitted by the Missionvale Care Centre in South Africa where a collaborative training event recently took place. Dr.Wes Geminn, our Department's Chief Pharmacist, was a featured speaker. Executive Director Joyce Whitmer, Executive Director for the Epilepsy Foundation of Middle and West Tennessee, helped coordinate the multi-national program. Gwen Hamer, Director of Education and Development, represents the Department on their board and scheduled Dr. Geminn for the presentation.



Dr.Wes Geminn for the surrounding Missionvale community – one of the poorest and most impoverished in the region.

Coordinated by Ben Worthington, a Ford engineer who spent two years on assignment at the Ford plant and became a global ambassador for the Missionvale Care Centre, the training session linked the community health practitioners in Port Elizabeth via web-based video conference with medical specialists at the Epilepsy Foundation in Nashville.

“This is a global effort that allows everyone to learn from each other,” Worthington said.“It is a chance to forge new relationships around the world and empower the caregivers with new skills and knowledge so they are able to better serve the community and share this information with others.”

Epilepsy Foundation Program Director, Neil Ferris, assembled a team of experts on epilepsy, comprising Susan

The Ford Struandale Engine Plant in Port Elizabeth, South Africa, recently facilitated a global training session for a team of 20 community health practitioners, professional nurses, and social workers from the nearby Missionvale Care Centre.

This centre, which was founded by Sister Ethel Normoyle, provides essential medical care, feeding schemes, clothing donations, schooling and skills development for

Holloway (Services Coordinator, Epilepsy Foundation) and Dr Sally Mathias, a neurologist at the Vanderbilt Hospital in Nashville.

They provided informative presentations on all aspects of epilepsy, including early detection and the key signs that a patient may have the condition, how to handle seizures and epileptic episodes, as well as medical treatment and lifestyle choices.They were joined by Wes Gemmin, PharmD, from the Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, who covered the diagnosis and treatment of schizophrenia in detail.

Throughout the interactive presentation, the caregivers were able to ask questions and address any concerns relating to their patients, who are either treated in the Missionvale Clinic or

cared for during home-based visits.

“The training was very interesting and informative and every bit of knowledge helps us serve the community better,” said Sister Annie van der Merwe, a professional nurse at the Missionvale Clinic.

Esterlene Campbell, Missionvale’s Head of Health and Supervisor of the Community Health Practitioners Unit, echoed the sentiment.“This training and ongoing relationship is very positive as it

provides a broader understanding of illnesses such as epilepsy and schizophrenia. There are so many myths and cultural issues in our community, especially relating to schizophrenia. It is very valuable for us as health workers, as it equips us to address various types of illnesses and provide even greater care for our patients.”

“ Every bit of knowledge helps us serve the community better.”

Sister Annie van der Merwe

IT Staff Recognized at State’s Annual Awards

Each year, the State’s Information Technology professionals hold an awards ceremony to recognize outstanding performance in the field.

This year, three nominees were from our Department.

Vic Hearne and Mohammed Osman are pictured here with TDMHSAS IT Director Richard Zhu. Also nominated was Gina Young (not pictured).

Way to go!

Left to right are Vic Hearne, Mohammed Osman, and Richard Zhu



Work Group Submits Report to Governor

by Mike Machak, TDMHSAS Director of Communications

Tennessee’s Opioid Abuse Reduction Act Working Group, convened by Commissioner Varney in 2015, examined the problem of opioid abuse in this state, with a primary focus on persons enrolled in TennCare and the potential impact of the use of FDA-approved, abuse-deterrent opioids. The Working

Group, which held meetings from July to November 2015, completed its work and submitted its report regarding findings and recommendations to Governor Haslam. Highlights of the report are below:

Facts:

- Tennessee has the 2nd highest opioid prescription rate in the U.S.
- Overdose deaths in Tennessee have increased 250% in the past ten years
- Drug-related crime continues to be a concern

Findings:

- Drug abuse and trafficking drives Tennessee’s crime rate
- While dropping some, Tennessee continues to have a violent crime rate far above the national average and is number one among southeastern states
- Much of the crime problem stems from individuals who are repeat offenders

Recommendations:

- Remove the 2016 sunset clause of the Tennessee Prescription Safety Act
- Continue to support data sharing among State Departments and Tennessee’s managed care organizations
- Increase data sharing about the effectiveness of abuse-deterrent technology
- The decision to add abuse-deterrent opioid products to the TennCare Formulary should continue to be made by TennCare

Tennessee Association of Drug Court Professionals Holds Annual Conference, Includes Graduation Program

by Liz Ledbetter, TDMHSAS Recovery Court Administrator

Tennessee Association of Drug Court Professionals (TADCP) held its Annual Training Conference Dec. 2-4 at the Embassy Suites and Conference Center in Murfreesboro. The theme for the 11th annual conference was “Collaboration: Working Together to Make a Difference.”

Kevin Batts, TADCP President, opened the conference to an audience of approximately 350 recovery court professionals and stakeholders. E. Douglas Varney, Commissioner, Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services welcomed the gathering and the Honorable Seth Norman was the keynote speaker.

The highlight of the opening ceremony was when three recovery court programs held graduations for participants who had successfully completed the program requirements. The 29th Judicial Recovery Court, 23rd Judicial Recovery Court, and

Gibson County Recovery Court made arrangements to hold their graduation during the opening ceremony for all to witness. It was a most memorable event for all.

The conference featured several nationally-known speakers and topics that covered a wide range of subject matter related to Adult, Veterans, and Juvenile Recovery Court programs.

The TADCP Awards luncheon presented the Christy Vernon Spirit Award to Janet Hobson, Director of Davidson County Residential Court (DC4). The first Judges Award which was presented to the Honorable Seth Norman, presiding judge of DC4.

The 12th annual TADCP Recovery Court Training Conference will be next December at the Chattanooga Marriott Conference Center.

11th Annual
March 15, 2016

Save The Date: March 15, 2016
following Behavioral Health Day on the Hill in Nashville...

Register at:
tn.gov/behavioral-health/article/art-for-awareness
Deadline: February 26, 2016

In the News...

by Mike Machak, Director of Communications/Public Information Officer



Department Programs, Commissioner Varney Featured in National Publications

November and December were spotlight months for Department initiatives. Two of the industry's most widely read publications, *Alcoholism & Drug Abuse Weekly* and *Mental Health Weekly*, featured the state's efforts in combating substance abuse and success in advancing recovery courts across Tennessee.

For the Nov. 23 issue of *Alcoholism & Drug Abuse Weekly*, Commissioner E. Douglas Varney discussed the rise of prescription drug abuse and the shift to heroin use occurring in Tennessee.

"We succeeded in making opiate medication harder to get for those who do not need them legitimately, making them less likely to be abused, and giving doctors more tools to

monitor their patients who are prescribed pain medicine," Commissioner Varney said. "These measures had the intended result in reducing availability, use, and abuse."

In the Dec. 7 issue of *Mental Health Weekly*, Commissioner Varney shared the benefits of Recovery Courts that offer individuals treatment services, counseling, and incentives to meet their recovery goals.

Commissioner Varney was quoted as saying, "We've seen a real change in attitudes in our state. People struggling with mental illness or substance abuse issues are getting better understanding and a chance to lead full and productive lives."



Recovery Courts Transform Lives

From a press release, Nov. 30

More people who struggle with mental health and substance use issues are getting clean, going back to school, finding work and their own place to live by participating in Recovery Courts in Tennessee.

According to Commissioner E. Douglas Varney, "These courts give people a second chance to be productive citizens. Those who choose this path are motivated to change their behavior and we're seeing good results."

More than 80% of those who participated in the program from 2013 to 2015 became employed or saw improvement in their job status, and nearly 30% who came into the program homeless or living in a group home secured their own place.

Research continues to show that these courts work better than jail or prison, better than probation, and better than treatment alone.

TN Focused on Ending Chronic Homelessness

From a press release, Nov. 12

In the summer of 2015, the Department secured a \$3.6 million federal grant to help hundreds of homeless veterans and chronically homeless people in East Tennessee.

Over a three-year period, the hope is that more than 500 homeless individuals across East Tennessee will be assisted with stable housing, access to substance and mental health treatment, opportunities for employment, and regular health care checkups.

The ultimate goal is to help them get clean and sober, become employable and ultimately self-sufficient.

"When we help an individual transition from homelessness to a more stable living situation, they benefit, the community benefits, and we are all better off," said Commissioner Varney.



To read TDMHSAS press releases in full, visit the online newsroom: tn.gov/behavioral-health/news



In the News...

Heroin Abuse is on the Rise in Tennessee

Excerpts from a message by Commissioner E. Douglas Varney

From a press release, Nov. 13

It pains me to see so many Tennesseans hurting because they or a loved one is self-destructing due to a substance use addiction. So many of our friends, neighbors, and colleagues have fallen victim to a habit that started innocently with prescription pain medicine and for many is now morphing into something far more sinister and dangerous.

Governor Haslam created an interdepartmental task force to fight the good fight on the prescription drug epidemic and to raise awareness about this issue. Increased awareness has been fundamental in this effort and we are now seeing a decrease in the amount of prescription drugs that are available. New laws, more treatment, the full court press from state government, law enforcement, and communities across Tennessee have been effective.

We've managed to serve thousands of our fellow Tennesseans with treatment and recovery services. However, our research indicates that there are still many who are still dealing with active addiction. We succeeded in making opiate meds harder to get for those who do not need them legitimately, making them less likely to be abused and giving doctors more tools to monitor their patients who are prescribed pain medicine. These measures had the intended result in reducing availability, use, and abuse.

As we forged efforts to reduce availability of opioid based pain remedies, in the shadows, heroin arrived on the scene. It arrived like a tidal wave in Tennessee. It's a far more potent form of opioids, cheaper, more dangerous, and more lethal.

The demand for opioids has been most pronounced in our rural communities, while heroin is surfacing more in our major cities and suburbs.

I'm saddened to see our friends and neighbors that have been struggling with opioid addiction now transitioning to heroin which is coming from the criminal underground street dealer.

Our research data from multiple sources now shows heroin is sharply on the rise in Tennessee:

- More people are seeking treatment for a heroin addiction in Tennessee
- Drug seizures, criminal activity, and arrests are increasing, mostly in urban areas
- Heroin use is rapidly increasing as the abuse of pain meds is leveling off

Anyone interested in detoxing from opioids may encourage their medical provider to taper them off the medication.

If you cannot get help from your medical provider, please call the Tennessee REDLINE anytime at 1-800-889-9789 to find treatment resources across the state.

For information and guidance on talking with a loved one who may be abusing heroin or to find substance use treatment resources across the state, call the Tennessee REDLINE anytime at 1-800-889-9789.

More Teens Saying No to Prescription Drugs

From a press release, Dec. 7

The National Survey on Drug Use and Health shows a decline in the abuse of Rx drugs by teens and young adults in Tennessee. Data collected from a 2010-2011 survey was just released and shows teens had decreased their use by 25% and young adults, 18 to 25, decreased use by 28%.

"These results are very encouraging," said Commissioner Varney. "We still have a significant problem in Tennessee with teens and young adults using drugs recreationally or as a way of self-medicating a mental health issue."

The 2010 passage of Tennessee's Prescription Drug Safety Act, which requires doctors to register and check a Controlled Substance Database before prescribing is one of many strategies that contributed to the decrease.

↓ 25%

the percentage decrease of prescription drug use among teenagers

↓ 28%

the percentage decrease of prescription drug use among young adults, 18-25

Peer Wellness Coaches Lead Health Fair at National Conference

by Leanne Crawford, Peer Wellness Coach

Over the summer, the “Alternatives” Conference planning committee invited the My Health, My Choice, My Life team to conduct a health and wellness fair at the conference. “Alternatives” is a conference in which SAMHSA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration) partners with peers to create a learning environment that promotes recovery and wellness through peer leadership.

An estimated 500 people from across the country and around the world attended this year’s 29th annual conference held in Memphis. The theme was “Believe” and focused on peers gathering, uniting, and believing that peer leadership plays a significant role in recovery and wellness in the mental health system.

The fair served focused on various topics, including: body mass index; smoking cessation and carbon monoxide blood level monitoring; blood pressure; blood glucose; fitness; heart health; lifestyle risk (including drug and alcohol assessments); and wellness coaching (action planning, discussing goals/future).

As participants entered, we gave them



The Health Fair Team: Leslie El-Sayad, James Pincham, Daisy Jabas, Kim Moore, Vik Moore, Allison Harwell, Jessica Collins, Lisa Ragan, Leanne Crawford, Mark Bresee, Julie Fann, Donald Williams, Marva Butler, and Dina Savvenas. Not pictured: Galal El-Sayad.

a “health passport.” We recorded their results at each station for them to keep and share with their doctor. Many told us it was the best health and wellness fair they have ever attended.

After the fair, Lisa Ragan, Director of Consumer Affairs and Peer Recovery Services for TDMHSAS; Peer Wellness Coach, Mark Bresee; and I conducted a workshop titled My Health, My Choice, My Life in Tennessee: The Role of Peer Wellness Coaches in Motivating Others Toward Greater Wellness. The hour-and-

a-half workshop included information on how our initiative began at state peer support centers and how it now extends into many areas.

We provided an overview of the Chronic Disease Self-Management, Diabetes Self-Management, Well-Body and Tobacco Free Workshops and one-on-one coaching. We discussed cultural considerations, evaluation techniques and outcomes, and how to implement wellness in their own state.

Kidcentral tn: A Go-To Resource for Parents

Submitted by Jude White, Executive Director, Governor Children’s Cabinet

Have you checked out this one-stop shop for connecting with important information and resources for your family? The website www.kidcentraltn.com pulls content from across state departments, making it easier for families to find what they need, including information on: children’s health, education, development, and support. The site also features:

Searchable Directory of State Services
This directory of state-operated and state-funded services includes listings for families with children, ages 0-18. Some services are designed for families with limited income, but many services are not (ex. student assistance, adolescent substance abuse programs, and Imagination Library).

“My Profile” Section
In this section, viewers can tailor the site to their family. They can see unique developmental milestones based on their child’s age and tag articles that are important for their family. Parents can receive recommendations for articles and services that might fit their needs.

Social Media and Email Alerts
See news from the state when you like kidcentraltn on Facebook and follow on Twitter. The service also issues twice-a-month email alerts with priority messages from the state. (Sign up at the bottom of the home page.)
“Our goal is to make these resources and information more accessible and useful to Tennessee families,” said Gov. Bill Haslam.



Staff Briefs

Jay Oziminski has joined the Division of Administrative Services as the Administrative Services Supervisor. He comes to TDMHSAS from Active Network, where he worked for 17 years in Customer Support and Program Management. Jay is married with four children and three grandchildren.

Abigail Dowell has joined the Office of Housing and Homeless Services in the Division of Mental Health as the Program Manager of the two Cooperative Agreement to Benefit Homeless Individuals (CABHI) grants. Abigail comes to TDMHSAS after working in TennCare as the Housing Specialist for Money Follows the Person, where she participated in the Interagency Council on Homelessness. She has worked as Transitional Housing Coordinator and Program Coordinator for YWCA’s Domestic Violence Services. She received her Bachelor’s degree in Social Work from Asbury College.

Avis Easley has been promoted to Program Manager I in the Division of Planning, Research and Forensics, Office of Planning. Avis has been employed with the Department for more than 20 years and has served in other capacities including Central Tennessee Licensure and at Middle Tennessee Mental Health Institute. She presently manages the Regional and Statewide Planning and Policy Council system and is the author of the Department’s Three-year Plan as well as reporting associated with the Plan. Avis also serves as the Chair of the Department of Health’s Traumatic Brain Injury Council and is a member of the Autism Council. Avis holds a Masters in Counseling from Tennessee State University in Nashville.



Cathi Hayes, Jessica DeWeerth, and Vicki Jones

Cathi Hayes has joined the Regional Intervention Program as a Parent Case Manager. Cathi graduated from Vanderbilt University with her Doctor of Audiology Degree in 2007. She was previously employed at Vanderbilt Bill Wilkerson Center as a pediatric audiologist for approximately 13 years. Originally from Illinois, Cathi has lived in Nashville for more than 15 years. She enjoys working with children and their caregivers. In her free time, Cathi enjoys spending time with her family.

Jessica DeWeerth has joined the Regional Intervention Program as a Parent Trainer. Jessica recently moved to Nashville from Charleston, South Carolina, where she worked in property and tax law. She has an undergraduate degree in Psychology and Violence Studies from Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia, and received her J.D. from The Charleston School of Law. She also worked as a Guardian ad Litem for Charleston County both prior to and after law school. When she is not working, she can be found hiking in and around Nashville with her husband and two sons.

Vicki Jones has joined the Regional Intervention Program as a Resource Consultant. Vicki comes to the Department from Tennessee Voices for Children where she was a highly accomplished Certified Family Support Provider. Double majoring in English and Sociology, with a concentration in Social Work, Vicki graduated from Tennessee State University in 2013.

**Find more staffing news
Commissioner’s Corner, pg. 20-21**

Welcome New Hospital Employees

RMHI employees hired Sept. - Dec. 1, 2015

Middle Tennessee Mental Health Institute

Barbie Adams, Psychiatric Technician
Prasant Akunuri, Psychiatric Hospital Patient Rights Advocate
Brandon Anderson, Psychiatric Technician
Aerry Austin, Recreation Therapist 1
Janet Barker, Registered Nurse 2
Paul Bartoszek, Information Resource Support Specialist 4
Kimberly Boone, Psychiatric Technician
Kathy Carlton, Registered Nurse 2
Amy Clark, Security Guard 1
Delia Delfino, Psychiatric Technician
Robert Flippen, Security Guard 1
Jason Gaddy, Psychiatric Technician
Pamela Hamilton, Custodial Worker 1
Florentina Herrera, Psychiatric Technician
Otome Jakpor, Registered Nurse 2
Tyrone Johnson, Psychiatric Technician
Chona Lobusta, Registered Nurse 2
Sherry Long, Psychiatric Technician
Kimberly Mineer, Registered Nurse 2
Robert Mulindwa, Registered Nurse 1
Jonathan Myers, Psychiatric Technician
Olusiji Ogunyemi, Registered Nurse 2
Cynthia Patton, Custodial Worker 1
Kristen Reed, Psychiatric Technician
Kathy Richards, Licensed Practical Nurse 2
Karen Richardson, Psychiatric Technician
Laura Roberts, Psychiatric Technician
Emanuel Samson, Psychiatric Technician
Julie Shorey, Licensed Practical Nurse 2
Kenna Stephens, Human Resources Analyst 2
Holly Stephenson, Registered Nurse 3
Patrick Tate, Security Guard 1
Tony Taylor, Registered Nurse 2
Kristen Williams, Psychiatric Technician
Jennifer Wilson, Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner
Jamie Wood, Psychiatric Technician
Kenneth Woods, Psychiatric Technician

Memphis Mental Health Institute

Sandy Alsobrooks, Psychiatric Technician
Jonathan Clark, Psychiatric Technician
Miko Collins, Psychiatric Technician
Phyllis Dooley, Psychiatric Technician
Dabonee Eleby, Psychiatric Technician
James Jones, Psychiatric Technician
Leighann Truong, Psychiatric Technician
Andrea Parker, Lead Psychiatric Technician
Justin Taylor, Registered Nurse 2
Marvis Rodgers, Registered Nurse 2
Mary L. Turner, Registered Nurse 3

Moccasin Bend Mental Health Institute

Jennifer Fravel, Psychiatric Technician
Audreea Ross, Psychiatric Technician
Roderick Grant, Psychiatric Technician
Kimberly Franklin, Psychiatric Technician
Sharon Wright, Psychiatric Technician
Adrienne Hines-Bond, Psychiatric Social Worker 1
Michael Stevenson, Psychiatric Technician
Mindy Brown, Recreation Therapist 2
Brittany Henegar, Recreation Therapist 2
Tiffany Reid, Psychiatric Technician
Adam Pruett, Building Maintenance Worker 1
John Fleet, Building Maintenance Worker 1
Joan Keel, Nurse Practitioner
Lee Martin, Psychiatric Technician
Anthony Holcomb, Psychiatric Technician
Tesla Green, Psychiatric Technician
Barbara Bennett, Psychiatric Technician
Darius Chalk, Psychiatric Technician
Mathew Smith, Psychiatric Technician
Marilynn Caulder, Registered Nurse 2
Jennifer Elrod, Registered Nurse

Western Mental Health Institute

Sandra Brown, Custodial Worker 1
Pierre Allen, Psychiatric Technician
Arlandius Armour, Psychiatric Technician
Mauriceo Beauregard, Psychiatric Technician
Gabriel Cheairs, Psychiatric Technician
Austin Greene, Psychiatric Technician
Brian Long, Psychiatric Technician
Joshua McClellan, Psychiatric Technician
Trellis McKinnie, Psychiatric Technician
Montavis Moore, Psychiatric Technician
Devante Phinnessee, Psychiatric Technician
Deontis Sain, Psychiatric Technician
Hunter Ware, Psychiatric Technician
Alina Haro, Patient Accounts Specialist 2
Victoria Rivers, Custodial Worker 1
Otavia Stewart, Custodial Worker 1
Keesha Reeid, Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner
Damien Kelso, Psychiatric Technician
Le’Ron Willis, Psychiatric Technician
Jessica Lake-Walker, Social Worker 2



To submit to Staff Briefs,
email OC.TDMHSAS@tn.gov

Western, Middle Regional Mental Health Institutes Awarded Gold Seal of Approval

by Mike Machak, Director of Communications

The Department is very pleased to recognize its behavioral health professionals at Western and Middle Tennessee Mental Health Institutes upon earning the Gold Seal of Approval® from The Joint Commission.

This is the third consecutive year both institutes achieved Top Performer status. The acknowledgment symbolizes a high degree of quality, reflecting the institutes’ commitment to providing safe and effective care.

“The Joint Commission’s Gold Seal of Approval® is recognition of the measures our professionals take every day to ensure they are providing the absolute best care and treatment for a wide array of behavioral health diagnosis,” said E. Douglas Varney, Commissioner for the



Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services. “With advances in therapies available to help people manage their mental health conditions, many more Tennesseans are living productive lives as a result of the work being done at the Western and Middle Tennessee Mental Health Institutes.”

During the past year, the institutes were evaluated on behavioral health care standards that included: care, treatment, and services; environment of care; leadership; and screening procedures for the early detection of imminent harm. On-site observations and interviews were also conducted.

Congratulations and job well done, MTMHI and WMHI!

MMHI Provides Crisis Training for Police

Submitted by Memphis Mental Health Institute

Memphis Mental Health Institute (MMHI) employees have partnered with local and international law enforcement officers to enhance officers’ awareness of mental health. MMHI provides training for over fifty officers approximately four times a year. These officers are known as the Crisis Intervention Team (CIT).

During training, officers are exposed to the basic dynamics of common types of mental illness. This training helps the CIT make educated decisions in utilizing options to resolve crises in the field. The training allows officers to interact with individuals who have mental disabilities when they are not in a crisis situation. This educational opportunity helps the officers become better trained in verbal de-escalation techniques and so much more. The partnership goal is for each officer to have working knowledge of mental health populations.

MMHI is excited to support the CIT officers in the area of mental health because CIT provides an immediate response to calls involving a large number of patients involved in crisis situations.



The Memphis Crisis Intervention Team receives training from Memphis Mental Health Institute employees about common types of mental illness they may encounter during a crisis situation in the field.



Dr. Boswell Wins Leadership Excellence Award

Dr. Jason “Jake” Boswell, a pharmacist at Moccasin Bend Mental Health Institute, recently received the hospital’s Leadership Excellence award. Dr. Boswell completed his first year of practice at Central Office as Jason Carter’s resident from July 2012 to June 2013. He completed his second year of residency specializing in psychiatric pharmacy at Rolling Hills hospital. He began work at Moccasin Bend in July 2014. Congratulations, Dr. Boswell!

Chattanooga Welcomes New CEO



Moccasin Bend CEO Mary Young (far right) speaks with colleagues at the afternoon reception.

Hospital Services and staff at Moccasin Bend Mental Health Institute celebrated their new CEO Mary Young in grand style. “The meet-and-greet reception held Nov. 9 provided a welcome opportunity for me to meet our community partners, begin to get to know them, and to hear more about the services they offer our shared consumers,” Young said. “It was also heartening to hear the high esteem in which Moccasin Bend is held by our colleagues and how vital our services are to the community. I am looking forward to ongoing work and collaboration with our community partners to better serve our shared clients.”

The special occasion attracted community leaders, board members, friends, and colleagues.



“ It was heartening to hear....
how vital our services are
to the community.”
CEO Mary Young



CEO Mary Young CEO and R. Mickey Robbins, Friends of Moccasin Bend, Chattanooga, and former member of the Board of Trustees



Ruth Ann Honeycutt, Board of Trustees member and Nurse Manager R. Sharon Burse



Charles Dickens, MBMHI administrative staff member and Rodney Battles, President & CEO of AIM Center, Chattanooga

Moccasin Bend Director of Nursing Retires

Dr. Charlynn Parson, Director of Nursing at Moccasin Bend, is retiring after 26 years with the State of Tennessee. She has served as the acting Director of Nursing for Moccasin Bend for 23 years.

Dr. Parson became a Registered Nurse after graduating from the Baroness Erlanger Hospital School of Nursing in 1964. She furthered her education throughout her career earning a Bachelor of Science in Psychology in 1974, a Bachelor of Science in Nursing in 1987, a Master of Science in Nursing in 1990, and a PhD in Education in 2008.

She is also certified in Nursing Administration, is active in numerous organizations including the American Nursing Association, TN Nursing Association, TN Organization of Nurse Executives, Area Consortium for Education, and Sigma Theta Tau, among others.

About her expansive nursing career, Dr. Parson exclaimed, “I didn’t find anything in nursing I didn’t like!”

She has been married to her husband, Maurice, for 26 years, is the mother of two children, and has three grandchildren.

Upon retiring she plans to continue teaching and remaining active in her many organizations. We are thankful for all her years of service and dedication to Moccasin Bend.



Moccasin Bend CEO Mary Young (left) with Dr. Charlynn Parson.

Veterans Honored at Western Mental Health Institute

by Lisa Coleman, Legal Assistant, Western Mental Health Institute

Western Mental Health Institute honored its employee and patient veterans with a special Veterans Day Reception on Nov. 10 at the hospital.

The Adjunctive Therapy Department organized the event and provided red, white, and blue refreshments. All veterans received a certificate of appreciation from the hospital which honored and thanked them for their military service. Twenty patients and 29 employees were recognized at the event.

Employees recognized were: Earl Bates, Information Systems manager; Jessie Beard, psychiatric technician; Amy Borseth, psychiatric technician; Bernard Bufford, psychiatric technician; Stacy Champion, psychiatric technician; Lloyd Coffee, Registered Nurse 3; Luezzane Dickerson, security chief; Michael Gibbs, psychiatric technician; John Gordon, Registered Nurse 2;

Johnny Hudson, psychiatric technician; Cynthia Jarrett, lead psychiatric technician; Brandon Johnson, security guard; Dr. Doug King, psychiatrist; Irene Matthews, psychiatric technician; James McGowan, property officer; Marshall McKinney, psychiatric technician; Rickie McKinnie, psychiatric technician; Ted Miller, grounds worker; Roger Pursley, CEO/ Superintendent; Dr. Jeffrey Robbins, psychiatrist; Patricia Shorter, clerk 3; James Spencer, boiler operator; Steven Thomas, psychologist; Larry Walton, psychiatric technician; Larry Wiggins, maintenance mechanic; Richard Wiley, maintenance mechanic; Gracie Williams, psychiatric technician; Callie Bassett, registered nurse; and Dr. George Mangle, physician.

Thank you for your service!



To submit Hospital News,
email Leslie.Judson@tn.gov
or call 615-770-0466

TAMHO Elects 2016 Leadership

The Tennessee Association of Mental Health Organizations (TAMHO) elected 2016 officers at the organization's recent annual meeting.

Robert Vaughn, CEO, Carey Counseling Center, will serve as President. He succeeds Chris Wyre, CEO/President, Volunteer Behavioral Health Care System. Wyre will remain on the board as Immediate Past President.



Robert Vaughn

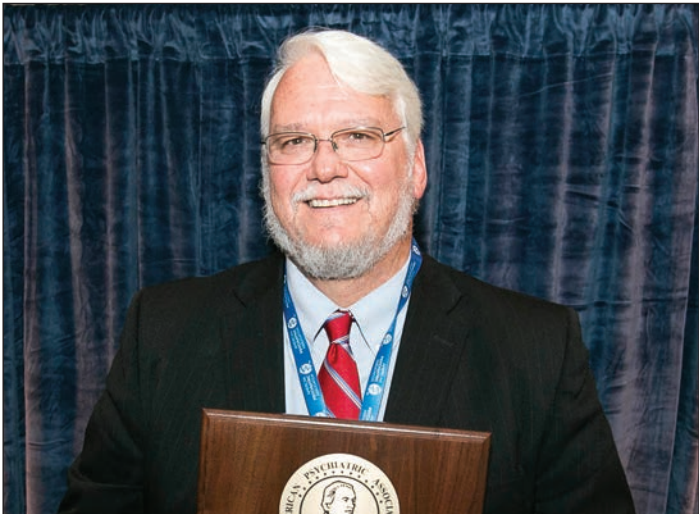
Brian Buuck, CEO, Ridgeview Behavioral Health, was elected President Elect. Julie Spears, Vice President for Finance, Centerstone, will serve a two-year term as Treasurer. Liz Clary, CEO, Peninsula Behavioral Health, will remain on the board as Secretary completing the second year of a two-year term.

TAMHO is a statewide trade association representing community mental health centers and other nonprofit corporations that provide behavioral health services. These organizations have historically met the needs of mentally ill and chemically dependent citizens of Tennessee from all age groups and socioeconomic levels. The TAMHO mission is to serve its members, promote the advancement of effective behavioral health services, and advocate for people in need of care. To achieve this mission, the TAMHO Board of Directors formulates an agenda each year that is designed to improve the effectiveness of treatment and support services for the mentally ill and to increase access to these services throughout the state.

Mental Health Association of East Tennessee Wins American Psychiatric Association Award

Each year, the American Psychiatric Association gives an organization the Silver Achievement Award for Student Outreach and Teacher Training to Ensure Prevention, Early Recognition, and Treatment of Mental Health Problems. This year, the Silver Achievement Award went to the Mental Health Association of East Tennessee (MHAET), Knoxville, for two of its programs: Mental Health 101 and Typical or Troubled?

Ben Harrington, Executive Director for MHAET, accepted the award at the Institute on Psychiatric Services conference in New York City on Oct. 8, 2015. Information about the award-winning programs is below and can be found on psychiatryonline.org. Search for Mental Health 101 and Typical or Troubled.



Ben Harrington holds the American Psychiatric Association Silver Achievement Award for Student Outreach and Teacher Training.

"MHAET has implemented a two-pronged integrated approach to reach both students and teachers: Mental Health 101 for middle and high school students and in-service training for teachers, including Typical or Troubled?, a program of the American Psychiatric Foundation. In the 2014-2015 school year, these programs had a direct impact on 23,928 students in 83 middle and high schools in the MHAET catchment area, which includes the urban areas of Chattanooga, Knoxville, and Johnson City/Kingsport and surrounding rural areas, a population of 2.5 million residents in 35 counties.

Prepost tests for Mental Health 101 participants have consistently shown positive outcomes. For the 2014-2015 school year, the following outcomes were documented: an increase of 325% in the number of high school students who could identify a sign of mental illness, a 191% increase in the number of high school students who could identify a warning sign of suicide, a 175% increase in the number of middle school students who could identify a warning sign of suicide, and a 50% increase in the number of middle school students who could identify the correct duration of symptoms before seeking help. In addition, the number of students who meet diagnostic criteria

for depression has decreased by 13% since 2005, a decline that has been attributed to the coping and stress management skills taught to all students.

There is strong evidence that MHAET's implementation of these two programs has saved lives. Mental Health 101 has enjoyed a constant presence in Knox County schools since 2000, whereas participation outside of Knox County has fluctuated over the years because of teacher transition. From 2005 to 2013, data from the Knox County Health Department and the Youth Risk Behavior Survey showed a 57% decrease in suicide attempts among high school students in Knox County, an average of 133 individuals per year, or a reduction in suicide attempts by 1,197 students over nine years. In addition, no suicides occurred in Knox County among individuals under age 18 in 2010, 2011, and 2012."

Frontier Health Receives Grant for Homeless Youth

Submitted by Frontier Health

U.S. Congressman Phil Roe, M.D., (TN-01), presented a \$200,000 grant to Frontier Health from the Administration for Children and Families, Family and Youth Services Bureau. The 36-month grant will help Link House continue providing runaway, homeless, and throwaway youth with emergency shelter and services.

"We are pleased to have the opportunity to continue to provide these services," said Frontier Health President and CEO Dr. Teresa Kidd. "This Administration for Children & Families grant makes a huge difference in the lives of runaway and vulnerable youth."

Frontier Health Senior Vice President of Tennessee Children's Services Kathy Benedetto agreed, "This grant gives us the opportunity to provide a safe atmosphere at a time when an adolescent is making critical decisions that may affect the rest of his or her life. We provide shelter and hope to steer them toward reconciliation with their family whenever possible."

Since 2003, Frontier Health has provided emergency shelter, food, clothing and counseling to 661 youth. Link House offers outreach, provides food, shelter, clothing, crisis intervention, assessment, individual, group and family counseling to adolescents. For younger more vulnerable or male youth, Frontier Health serves runaway or homeless youth in host homes through the TRACES Program.

After youth are discharged, Link House staff provides aftercare to ensure successful long-term reunification with family, or another supportive adult. Link House has served runaway youth for 29 years.

Link House is for youth who leave home to escape abuse or neglect, drug or alcohol problems of family members, family members who make them leave, or maybe because they feel they just don't belong. Leaving home is not always something a youth would choose to do, yet nationwide more than 1 million run away from home each year.



Left to right: Kathy Benedetto, Frontier Health, Senior Vice President of Tennessee Children's Services; Dr. Teresa Kidd, Frontier Health President and CEO; U.S. Congressman Phil Roe; Christy Mullins, Link House Residential Manager; and Kim Trantham, LCSW, Frontier Health Division Director of Tennessee Children's Continuum Services.

Frontier Health Foundation Focuses on Business Development

Joy McCray, who formerly led the Family Links Respite Program, returned to Frontier Health as Director of Business Development to build a coalition of supporters through community awareness and partnerships and to lead fundraising efforts for the Frontier Health Foundation.

"This new role is very exciting. We're working to develop innovative and creative ideas for outreach, awareness, and community giving," McCray said. "The best way to build a network of giving in our community is to start with awareness of Frontier Health resources and programs for the individuals and communities we serve."

Dr. Teresa Kidd, President and CEO, said, "I'm enthusiastic about the growth of the Frontier Health Foundation and know that as we build awareness we will generate an investment in our



Joy McCray

services to help us to continue to positively impact those we serve."

Upcoming Foundation projects being developed are a Spring Greenwood Challenge ropes course fundraiser and a fall gala.



Providers: We want to hear from you!
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Congratulations 2015 TAMHO Honorees

The Tennessee Association of Mental Health Organizations (TAMHO) bestowed its highest honors during its annual conference in December. Thirteen awards were given to exceptional individuals and to agency programs.

President’s Award

Estie Harris, Smith Harris Carr

Program of Excellence Award

Carey Counseling Center – OnTrack Tennessee
Frontier Health – Peer Recovery Services
Helen Ross McNabb – Mother Goose Program
Frontier Health – Sullivan House

Media Award

The Tennessean
Maria Hallas, ABC News Channel 24, Memphis
The Oak Ridger
Kristi Nelson, Knoxville News Sentinel

Personal Courage Award

Katie Gibson, Volunteer Behavioral Health Care System

Distinguished Service Award

James A. Harding, Volunteer Behavioral Health Care System

Dorothea Dix Professional Service Award

Hilde Phipps, Helen Ross McNabb Center

Frank G. Clement Community Service Award

Captain Don Jones, Knoxville Police Department



2015 TAMHO honorees are: (left to right, standing) Kevin Adams, Carey Counseling Center; Tonya Brown, Carey Counseling Center; Dale Mathis, Carey Counseling Center; Kim Trantham, Frontier Health; Deb Yarborough, Carey Counseling Center; Scott Jeffers, Frontier Health; Maria De Varenne, The Tennessean; David Plazas, The Tennessean; Captain Don Jones, Knoxville Police Department; James A. Harding, Volunteer Behavioral Health Care System; Katie Gibson, Volunteer Behavioral Health Care System; Michael Yates, Ridgeview Behavioral Health; Kristi Nelson, Knoxville News Sentinel (left to right, seated) Maria Hallas, ABC News, Channel 24, Memphis; Mary Fultineer, Frontier Health; Ginger Naseri, Frontier Health; Hilde Phipps, Helen Ross McNabb Center; Meredith Brannan, Helen Ross McNabb Center; Estie Harris, Smith Harris Carr

Submitted by the Tennessee Association of Mental Health Organizations

Wellness Councils Gearing Up for a New Year

The goal of Working for a Healthier Tennessee is to encourage and enable state employees to lead healthier lives, and the start of a new year is an ideal time to renew wellness goals! That’s exactly what our Wellness Councils are doing across the state.
See what our RMHIs and Central Office have planned for an active, healthier 2016.

WMHI Wellness Council: Andrew Prather, Mary Williamson, Derrick Rhodes, Diane Lafferty, and Ernest Jones.

Not pictured: Carrie McGowan, Callie Basset, Ramona Spencer, Cassandra Boyle, Curtis Neal, Bernette Messenger, Minnie Stewart, and Lorice Shaw



Western Mental Health Institute

Our Resolution:
We will meet monthly to plan wellness activities that support exercising most days of the week, eating healthy, and not smoking. We will create a Wellness Communications Center to assist us with messaging, and we’d like to develop a rewards and recognition program.



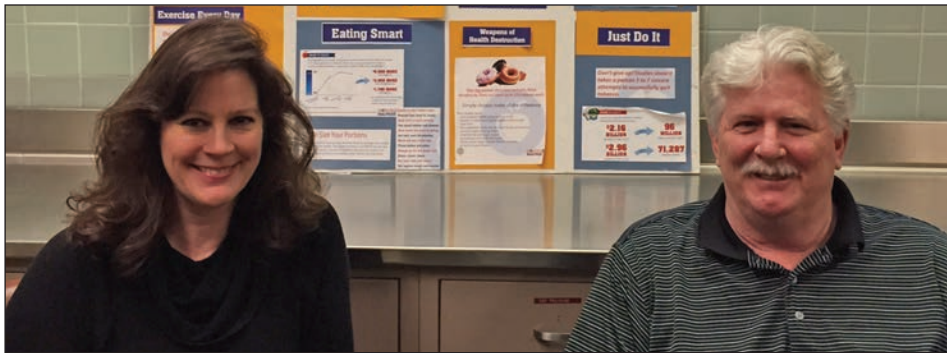
MTMHI Wellness Council
Kristine Gordon, Dustin Jones, Don Chambliss, Steve Blair, Jamma Law, and Tammy Thomas.
Not pictured: Christina Coleman, Liesel Cramer, Lisa Groves, and Mel Cauthen

Middle Tennessee Mental Health Institute

Our Resolution:
We would like to resolve to continue a culture of wellness among staff by focusing on healthy eating habits. We will be incorporating weight loss challenges into our programming throughout the year.

Moccasin Bend
Mental Health Institute

Our Resolution:
We would like to resolve to continue a culture of wellness among our staff by focusing on fitness challenges. We also want to ensure that all staff are aware of valuable benefits available through the Employee assistance program.



MBMHI Wellness Council: Gerald LaCourse and Susan Feltman. Not pictured: Ryan Beckett and Keye Blackmon



Memphis
Mental Health Institute

Our Resolution:
We would like to resolve to encourage a healthier heart lifestyle. We also will put a greater emphasis on healthier eating. We will start our year with a table tennis tournament in January.

MMHI Wellness Council: Charles Taylor (left) and Bobby Golden leading by example.

Central Office

Our Resolution:
We are placing more emphasis on physical activity and ways to improve mental health!



Central Office Wellness Council: Mike Machak, TDMHSAS Chair Sarah Sanders, Kara Miller, Vivian Verran, Sawsun Habib, Leslie Judson, Carrie Kissner, Monty Burks, Tony Jackson, Alex King, and Debbie Shahla. Not Pictured: Nancy Tidwell

Service Awards 2015



Central Office Staff gathered in December for the annual Service Award celebration. Some of those honored are pictured above. The complete list of honorees, along with years of service, is below.

5 Years:

Anita Bertrand
Mark Stevens

10 Years:

Dr. Howard Burley
Lalena Caputo
Gary Hancock
Dialette A. Hayes
Angela McKinney-Jones
Lisa Ragan
David Sherman
April Stewart
Don Thornton

15 Years:

Janet Marie Williams
Lygia Williams

20 Years:

Phaedra Black
Edwina Chappell
Vicki Ervin
Elizabeth Ledbetter
Melissa Peters

25 Years:

James Emmett

30 Years:

Vickie Graham
Patsy Greene
Joyce Siever
Jacqueline Talley

35 Years:

Donald Smothers

40 Years:

DJ Smith

Thank you for your service!

Welcome!

Bob Micinski
Assistant Commissioner
Administrative Services | Central Office

Bob is the new Assistant Commissioner for the Division of Administrative Services. He has been the Chief Executive Officer for Middle Tennessee Mental Health Institute since October 2012. Prior to this appointment, Bob worked as the Assistant Superintendent of Quality Management for Lakeshore Mental Health Institute. While Bob was at MTMHI, the Joint Commission recognized the hospital as a Top Performer on Key Quality Measures in 2012, 2013, 2014 and 2015. Bob has 22 years of service with the State of Tennessee. We welcome him to Central Office.

Heather Gundersen, former Assistant Commissioner for Administrative Services, has accepted a position in the Department of Finance & Administration as Business Domain Director for Health and Social Services. We thank her for her service to TDMHSAS and wish her well in her new role.



Kelley Sallas
Executive Assistant
Office of the Commissioner | Central Office

Kelley Sallas is the new Executive Assistant to the Office of the Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner. Kelley graduated from the University of Tennessee in 2001 with a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology. She has been working at the Vanderbilt Psychiatric Hospital for more than five years in the psychosis unit as a Mental health Specialist. Kelley came to work for the State of Tennessee in May 2014 serving as a Mental Health Inpatient Coordinator at Middle Tennessee Mental Health Institute. She eventually became the Treatment Plan Coordinator for the Forensic Services Program. In May 2015, Kelley transferred to Central Office to become the Administrative Assistant for the Division of Hospital Services working under Assistant Commissioner John Arredondo. Kelley is a Memphis native.



Welcome!

Katie Lee
Director of Wellness and Employment
Division of Mental Health Services | Central Office

Katie is a Licensed Master Social Worker who received her Bachelor of Science in Social Work from the University of Tennessee at Martin and her Master of Science in Social Work from the University of Tennessee. Before coming to TDMHSAS as Director of Wellness and Employment, Katie was the statewide IPS Trainer working with community mental health agencies to implement individual Placement and Support. Katie previously worked with TDMHSAS for three and a half years as the Program Manager for *My Health, My Choice, My Life*, a federally-funded statewide health and wellness initiative. Katie has also been a case manager and therapist with Centerstone, working with older adults and in the Partial Hospitalization Program. Raised in middle Tennessee, Katie and her husband Cody, live in Hendersonville and enjoy eating at new and unique restaurants, exploring state parks, and spending time with friends and family.



Matt Yancey
Director of Special Projects
Division of Mental Health Services | Central Office

Matt is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker who received has Bachelor of Science in Anthropology from Berry College, a Master of Social Work from the University of Georgia, and a Master of Public Administration from Kennesaw State University. Before coming to TDMHSAS, Matt was the Director for the Office of Children, Young Adults, and Families with the Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities. Matt previously served as the Director for the Office of Adolescent and School Health with the Georgia Department of Public Health and as Project Director for a SAMHSA Safe Schools/Healthy Students federal grant awarded to the Cobb County School District. Matt also has extensive experience in child welfare, having previously served the Georgia Division of Family and Children Services. Matt is married to Erin, and they have a four year-old daughter, June.



Enhancing Patient Care

Tennessee’s Mental Health Institutes evolving again as demand rises for mental health care

by Mike Machak, Director of Communications

While serving as a physician during the Vietnam War, Moccasin Bend Clinical Director Dr. Terry Holmes, MD, recalls the challenges he faced providing medical care to the troops. One of which was staffing.

“During the war, we couldn’t retain doctors,” said Dr. Holmes. “The military’s solution was the use of physician extenders, what are known today as nurse practitioners and physician assistants.”

Nurse extenders, according to Dr. Holmes, gave physicians like himself the ability to see, evaluate, and diagnose more patients, ultimately leading to improved healthcare services and better outcomes.

Given the difficulty of retaining doctors during the Vietnam era, “extenders,” according to Dr. Holmes, were used widely during the conflict.

“Basically we could see twice as many patients. Extenders made up approximately 30% of our clinical teams,” said Dr. Holmes. “It worked well for the military and for me professionally.”

Faced with many service members who struggled with psychiatric issues as well as having physical needs, Dr. Holmes found himself drawn to psychiatry.

“Usually the issue was psychiatric,” said Dr. Holmes.

When he joined the Department in the late 1990s, Dr. Holmes soon realized Tennessee’s Regional Mental Health Institutes faced some of the same challenges like those he encountered in the armed forces.

Response to increasing demands in Tennessee’s Mental Health Institutes

“We couldn’t recruit a psychiatrist for love or money,” said Dr. Holmes. “And as demand nationwide grew, it became clear we had to consider another alternative – the mid-level nurse practitioner – as a means to structuring the delivery of our mental healthcare services.”

What Dr. Holmes and others soon realized, the model of nurse practitioners reporting directly to a primary psychiatrist resulted in a collaborative environment that truly benefits the patient.

“Considering that we average 300 to 350 admissions a month, our nurse practitioners very quickly develop competencies in mental health diagnosis and treatment,” said Dr. Holmes. “They’re loyal, very hard working and don’t require a lot of supervision. They also have the ability to assess and address changes to a patient’s treatment plan.”

By engaging the nurse practitioner model, patients benefit from this team approach, from diagnosis through treatment.

The future of Mental Health Services in Tennessee

With physician review and in concert with best practice guidelines and protocols established by The Joint Commission, Moccasin Bend’s Nurse Practitioner model is serving as a model for Tennessee’s other Regional Mental Health institutes.

“We’ve created a recipe that everyone can follow,” said Dr. Holmes. “The key ingredients are judgment, quality decision-making, and doing it economically.”



Dr. Terry Holmes, Moccasin Bend Mental Health Institute

Keep reading (pgs. 23-29) to meet our nurse practitioners and psychiatric nurse practitioners



Meet Moccasin Bend’s Nurse Practitioner Team

Working alongside Dr. Terry Holmes (pg. 22) are his nurse practitioners, a team of five professionals making a difference in the lives of countless men and women who are treated at Moccasin Bend Mental Health Institute. We were honored to spend a few minutes with them on a recent afternoon.

Karen Milen has been a nurse for 28 years, a nurse practitioner for five. She joined the team at Moccasin Bend in 2013.

Minnie Troupe has 38 years of experience as a nurse. She has been with Moccasin Bend since 2007.

Joan Keel has 20 years working as a nurse and joined the MB nursing staff in 2013.

Bruce E. Dyer, Sr. has been a nurse for seven years, a nurse practitioner for six.

Bertha Hodgins has been a nurse since 1978, a nurse practitioner since 1998. She began working at Moccasin Bend in 2003.



Front row, left to right: Karen Milen, Minnie Troupe, and Joan Keel
Back row, left to right: Bruce Dyer and Bertha Hodgins

Why do you choose to work in psychiatry?

Bruce: *Psychiatry is the only facet of medicine where the limits of pharmacology are pushed. We use an aggressive psychological approach to help.*

Karen: *I chose to work in psychiatry, because it’s a chance to make a difference in a population that is often under-served and misunderstood. People with mental illness need advocates, a “champion” to their cause because many times they are unable to speak for themselves due to their illness.*

Joan: *Because we all, on some level, are faced with the effects of a person’s mental status. To be able to apply my nurse practitioner skills in this patient population allows me to use all my skills to help in understanding how their whole health impacts mental health and vice versa.*



Q & A with MBMHI’s Nurse Practitioners

What is the most rewarding part of your job?

- Bruce:** *Merging nursing practice with medical practice to provide a higher level of care.*
- Bertha:** *I work with interesting people. We can observe patients who enter the hospital totally confused. Their thoughts clear and they can communicate all kinds of things.*
- Minnie:** *I truly enjoy working with this category of patients.*
- Karen:** *The most rewarding part of my job is helping a patient recover – to see a disorganized, scattered patient reach recovery through the use of therapeutic dialogue, medication, activity therapy, and group work.*
- Joan:** *To see patient outcomes. From the admissions in acute state of their chronic mental illness to real stability and being able to return to their lives – being able to function in their full capacity.*

Can you share an example of a particularly rewarding patient experience?

- Bertha:** *We received an elderly, autistic patient who had been in an institution since the age of 12. He would not allow his parents to hug him. He would not talk much. After being at Moccasin Bend for a little over a year, he would allow his parents to hug him. He would ask shyly to call them so he could talk to them. He shows emotion when they visit.*
- Bruce:** *Treating a patient that had not gotten better on a traditional medication regimen, but after a short time on our unit, she improved greatly.*
- Minnie:** *A patient who has been so agitated and disorganized that she has had difficulty functioning. For years she has gone from hospital to hospital. She recently started electroshock therapy and it is remarkable to see her gradually improving.*
- Karen:** *A patient I was helping had very negative symptoms and through medication and the team’s efforts, the patient slowly began to emerge from their shell. After the patient recovered, he was so grateful and explained how he had “felt trapped” and we, the team, had “found the key” to unlock his mind.*

Meet Our Psychiatric Nurse Practitioners



Holly Liter, Middle Tennessee Mental Health Institute

I decided to leave the music industry after five years and pursue a career in nursing because, while the music industry was fun and exciting, it left me unfulfilled. When I would consider different career avenues, nursing became a reoccurring option and one that I felt drawn towards. Originally when I started nursing school at Vanderbilt, psychiatry was not my focus. I had my mind set that I wanted to work in cardiology or orthopedics, but then I went to my first psychiatry rotation at Park Center in Nashville and everything changed.

You know when something just feels right, almost like a piece of the puzzle has been found? That is what it felt like my first day at Park Center. In a way, I feel as if psychiatry chose me that day and my decision to start nursing school suddenly made sense.

There are many aspects about being a Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner that I enjoy – meeting diverse patients, learning from them, helping them to better understand their illness, and trying to instill hope and purpose for their future. Some of the aspects of the job that I enjoy most include deciphering the patient’s diagnosis and subsequent treatment and of course, seeing the patient improve and regain a functional status that maybe they have not had in quite some time.

I feel the most important aspect of my job is validating the patient and making sure they feel heard and on some level understood.

Also, teaching the patient about their illness in a way they are able to understand is very important so they understand the necessity to continue care upon discharge.

Middle Tennessee Mental Health Institute is very different from any other setting in which I have worked because of the team approach to holistic care for each patient.

The patient’s overall care extends past the direct treatment team and into support staff and even administration at times, which is unique. We all rejoice when a patient improves and succeeds and we all collaborate when we feel a patient is facing more difficult challenges. Every person I have met at Middle Tennessee Mental Health truly has a heart to help those in need and who suffer from mental illness – that is hard to find.

For future psychiatric nurses and nurse practitioners, my advice would be to first learn how to care for yourself appropriately. We see and hear things that are not common and can at times be disturbing. Meditating, exercising, laughing, listening to music – whatever it is that helps you to revitalize and relax, you need to start performing daily while in nursing school to help prepare for work upon graduation. Second, be selective in where you work. You need to make sure that you feel comfortable, valued, and supported with the other clinical staff. And third, have fun. This work is challenging, but very rewarding and fulfilling.

Turner Jernigan, Middle Tennessee Mental Health Institute

My interest in psychiatric medicine began with a desire to understand how there can be such vast differences in individuals’ behavior, personalities, and their experiential interpretation of “reality” - which is all determined by the processes in the brain. It was a General Psychology course that sparked my interest, and I was especially fascinated by the works of Freud, Erickson, Jung, and Skinner; as well as by social psychology. This led to me obtaining a Bachelor’s of Science degree in Psychology in 1998.

While working as case manager with severe and persistently mentally ill patients, I began to develop a greater interest in the biological causes of, and the medications used to treat these illnesses. Then a Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner at the clinic where I worked informed me of the Vanderbilt University School of Nursing’s Nurse Practitioner Program, and after two semesters of additional education in the applied sciences,

I was accepted to the program in 2000 and chose psychiatry as my specialization.

The thing I enjoy the most about my profession is that every day brings new opportunities for increasing my knowledge and experience in psychiatric medicine. Working in a hospital environment is very conducive to this as you sometimes see immediate results of the medicinal and behavioral interventions we use to benefit the health of our clients. The most important aspect of my job is that it allows me to serve a marginalized and poorly understood medical population and to give people suffering from mental illness more understanding and hope that their lives can be improved.

Working at MTMHI has been a fulfilling and challenging experience as I am learning new things every day, working with medical and other mental health professionals with decades of experience from which I can draw upon, and there is a good sense of teamwork.



Meet Our Psychiatric Nurse Practitioners

Jennifer Wilson, Middle Tennessee Mental Health Institute

I am an adult psychiatric nurse practitioner who has been practicing since 2007. My areas of interest are the severely and persistently mentally ill and those with addiction issues, including substance abuse and eating disorders.

I have worked in addictions treatment programs since 1996 and in rural and underserved outpatient mental health programs since 2005. I have always been fascinated by the complexities of the mind and by what motivates people to do what they do. I always knew that I wanted to help people in some capacity. With the rapid expansion of psychotropic medications in the 1990s and with the growing field of advanced practice nursing, I decided that the psychiatric nurse practitioner role is the perfect blend of counseling and psychiatry, serving as the best platform for which I can help others.

Being a psychiatric nurse practitioner is rewarding because it enables me to utilize both the art of psychotherapy and the science of medicine in order to help patients.

There is always an opportunity to learn and grow within the field. The best part of my job is connecting with clients and making a positive difference in their lives. I have been working with nursing students since 2012. I enjoy teaching the pearls of clinical practice that can't be learned in the classroom. I also try to convey to students the importance of being genuine and of conveying empathy.

Working at Middle Tennessee Mental Health Institute has been an exciting opportunity. The psychiatric nurse practitioners work closely with the psychiatrists and get to be part of a clinical team which is comprised of medical providers, social workers, nurses, and psychiatric technicians. I enjoy being able to collaborate with the various disciplines and find the variety of patients to be an exciting challenge. The best part of working at the hospital has been the warm and caring staff members who have been friendly and helpful and are diligent in their efforts in providing quality patient care.



Darcy McPherson, Middle Tennessee Mental Health Institute

I became a Registered Nurse in 2003 after having some medical issues and spending a lot of time in the hospital. While hospitalized I became close with some of the nurses taking care of me and decided it was something I could do. Prior to nursing, my background was in creative writing and English. I was a word girl. I loved observing and describing the world and human behavior. After becoming an RN, I gravitated towards psychiatry because it involved observing and describing people and their worlds. I worked in state psychiatric hospitals, outpatient clinics, residential programs, crisis centers, and detention centers.

In 2009, I became a Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner and began working for a Program of Assertive Community Treatment. It was a 24/7 intensive service for severely and persistently mentally ill patients that functioned like a hospital without walls. I visited patients in their homes, in hospitals, in jail and grew to love the language of psychosis. I learned how to make meaning of communication that was presented in more disorganized format. I learned how to think outside the box at that job. None of my patients were people that had succeeded in traditional treatment. We were “non-

traditional” and “real-life” in our treatment approach.

I also work part-time at a residential substance abuse treatment program for women and supervise Vanderbilt Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner students. Explaining the profession and sharing knowledge keeps you passionate about what you do. And it is encouraging to be able to inspire others and help them along their career path. In 2010 I traveled to Freetown, Sierra Leone and worked in Kissy Mental Hospital. That experience helped me realize more than ever the importance of relationship in psychiatry. All of the concepts of western medicine and psychiatry are not necessarily relevant in other cultures.

In September of 2015 I was ready for a change and came to work at Middle Tennessee Mental Health Institute. What I love most about my job here is that I get to work with more challenging cases. This is their home and many of them have no family or outside supports. The relationships they have with hospital staff are often the only consistent and nurturing relationships in their life.

Continued on page 28



Meet Our Psychiatric Nurse Practitioners

Belinda Douglas, Western Mental Health Institute

Being the youngest of five children, having cared for others my entire life, and growing up in rural southeast Missouri, it seemed natural to be drawn into the helping professions. I learned my injection technique on the swine and bovine on the farm. I helped care for elder grandparents and learned early in life that even though they may be wrought with chronic illness, a difference can be made with companionship, warmth, and a smile. My mother worked in a hospital in the St. Louis area as a nursing assistant. My dad wrote in my baby book that I would be a nurse, so I guess I was destined for nursing.

I enjoy analyzing how to best deal with the disease process/illness the patient experiences. The body, mind, and spirit must be in sync and if one of those parts is not in “tune” then the whole structure begins to disintegrate. This is the true definition of holistic nursing. This is why I was drawn to attend a dual path program at the University of South Alabama that was both geriatric and psychiatric. My undergraduate work was done at Arkansas State University, which was a BSN to nurse practitioner program. I waited until my children were a little older prior to begin my nurse practitioner route to accommodate the nursing regulations in the state of Tennessee. During the interval, I taught in a technical college, became the nursing director, Assistant Director for the College, then the interim Director for the College. I devoted 26 years with technical education for the State of Tennessee (under the Tennessee Board of Regents system) while keeping my nursing skills current.

Having been in administration at a technical college allows me

to appreciate the many paths which can be taken to allow someone to reach a destination. What is important is getting to the destination, not the road traveled to get there. Nursing is a rewarding career with many paths to attain as well as a multitude of specialties.

My current job allows me to fulfill my life destiny. It also allows me more balance in my life, to have a set schedule, affording me additional time with family. Family time is important to me especially with two teenage children. Although this job has deadlines, I have less stress than previous positions. There are challenges with any job and I embrace those as they come, taking one day at a time. Each day is a new learning experience.

Working as a team is the most important part of this position as a psychiatric nurse practitioner. Team is truly the “theme” at Western Mental Health Institute. I consider it a blessing to be employed here.

Keesha Reid, Western Mental Health Institute

God does not reveal every detail of His plan for our lives. Nevertheless, there is an inner assurance that comes when we do His will. As a child and part of my adult life, I suffered from trypanophobia (fear of needles). So, becoming a nurse was not a burning desire. I completed a BBA-Finance/Insurance degree from MTSU (Murfreesboro). After working in my field, I did not have that inner satisfaction or the feeling of making a difference in my world. In the Providence of God, I came in contact with a nurse who informed me she also had an irrational fear of needles. So, I asked how did she overcome. Her response was earth-shattering information. She said, “I am on the other side of the needle.” This was a WOW

moment for me. I decided to go for it!

I applied and was accepted in the Nashville General Hospital LPN program. I worked as a sitter/CNA while in this 11-month program. My first jobs as an LPN were with Metro-Nashville Bordeaux Rehab/Nursing Home then a cardiac floor at Centennial Medical Center. These are the workplaces I gained the feelings that I was making changes in my world, changes in other's lives, and feelings of satisfaction. Most of all, I had several confirmations that I was on God's plan. After working with RNs, I got the itch to further my education, with a desire to work in the emergency department and intensive care units. It took me several years to complete my Associate of Science in Nursing degree from TSU (Nashville) in 2002 and then my Bachelor of Science in Nursing in 2004. During this time I worked in various areas of nursing.

Through the climbing of my nursing career, I have raised my son as a single parent with the help of my mother. I made a goal to complete the highest degree in nursing before my son graduate high school. I returned to school and completed my MSN and then began to teach nursing at Jackson State Community College along with various areas of nursing as a Family Nurse Practitioner. One of these areas was a replacement therapy clinic. This is where I saw the dual diagnosis first hand. This is also where my passion for treating mental illnesses initiated. The substance abuse issue was being addressed and the mood disorder portion was being referred to the client's closest mental health community clinic.

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Belinda Douglas (left) and Keesha Reid

Meet Our Psychiatric Nurse Practitioners

Melinda Mosby,
Memphis Mental Health Institute

From the age of 14, I knew I wanted to be in the healthcare profession. My grandparents worked in our local hospital. My grandmother was in the housekeeping department; however, she always talked about wanting to be a nurse. She was able to describe the things the nurse did in such a manner that made me feel like I was in the hospital. I enjoyed listening. This is the beginning of my passion for my profession.

When I graduated, I tried pediatrics, labor and delivery, and community nursing. None of these areas were able to keep my attention long. Caring for the mentally ill provided me with a different challenge each day. Knowing that I could help a population who is under-served, that I could educate family members on what is necessary to maintain stabilization, and that I could provide resources to help limit hospitalization have kept me in this area for more than 14 years. For example, when a young schizophrenic patient experiences their first psychiatric break, family members are devastated. Many times the patient is doing well in college and is able to maintain employment. When this break occurs, families do not understand what is happening. The families just know something is wrong with my child and we need some help. As a PMHNP, first, I try to stabilize the patient, because when family members see that the behavior has changed; their anxiety will decrease. Then education can begin. I set aside time for family members to ask any questions about the patient's diagnosis, symptoms, or medications. Before discharge, my team (social workers, nurses, pharmacist, recreational therapist, treatment plan facilitator) and I provide outpatient appointments at community mental health facilities and other resources such as Alcohol and Drug referrals. My passion continues because I know that I can help that patient return to college and continue to pursue their education goals or return to work.



I have been employed at Memphis Mental Health Institute since 2005. I started as a staff nurse working with the dual diagnosis population. Then, I was promoted to Nursing Supervisor. I recently graduated from the University of South Alabama Post-Masters Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner Program and accepted a position. Why? The administration has allowed me to progress in my profession, the staff genuinely cares about providing the best discharge plan to the patient, in spite of the limited resources, and the staff cares about each other. Anyone who has a passion to give to a population that is less fortunate than most populations, this would be the career choice for you.

I contribute all my success to my spiritual relationship with God and my family. My family has supported me throughout my education. As I have heard from several instrumental mentors, if you love what you do, you do not work a day in your life. As for me, I love my profession and specialty and have not worked a day since I experienced the mental health population.

Keesha Reid,
Western Mental Health Institute
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While I was contemplating if I would work toward a certification in Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner, I learned the Doctor of Nursing Practice degree (one of the highest degrees in nursing) was available. Therefore, I applied and was accepted into University of Tennessee Health Science Center-Memphis DNP program with an emphasis in psychiatric mental health. I was able to complete this program before my son completed high school!

During my childhood I was taught the 23rd Psalm. In this Psalm it starts out: "The Lord is my shepherd." This has been included in my daily prayer - to be led and guided by Him. I can say absolutely this prayer has been answered during my 20-year nursing career. I so believe the Lord has led and guided me on my career path. I now have the inner assurance I am doing His will.

Now, working for the State of Tennessee in the Department of Mental Health & Substance Abuse Services as a Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (PMHNP) gives me a great opportunity to work with a team of psychiatrists, social workers, nurses, and therapists. In working with a team, I am afforded the chance to treat those patients with severe mental illnesses and assist with transitioning them back to our communities.

Darcy McPherson,
Middle Tennessee Mental Health Institute
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Nothing is more rewarding than being able to help a person's symptoms improve to the point that they can return to live in the community. And when that is not possible, being able to validate their story and their value as an individual can improve their quality of life. All of my life I have been interested in things others found boring or unappealing. I was busy finding beauty where I was told that there was none. I was busy finding meaning where others said there wasn't any. I feel like I continued these pursuits when I went into Psychiatric Nursing. Every day is about finding beauty and meaning in individuals and their stories. The lives of my patients at MTMHI don't always manifest beauty and meaning in a traditional and obvious manner but they are there. It is my job to find them and treasure them.

Loan Repayment Program Relieves Student Debt

If you are an RN at Tennessee's Regional Mental Health Institutes, you qualify



As you read on the previous pages, there are many advantages to working as a nurse in Tennessee's Regional Mental Health Institutes (RMHI). That includes being eligible to have your student debt relieved through a U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services program administered by the Health, Resources, and Services Administration (HRSA).

"This is not a program that I have personally had the opportunity to utilize, but many colleagues in the field of nursing in Tennessee have," said Nurse Executive Laura Young (pictured, left). "With the cost of education rising, the student loan debt is increasing. Nurses seeking an advanced practice degree will incur an additional ten thousand to twenty

thousand per year in student loan debt. The opportunity to have a significant amount of student loan debt reduces a tremendous amount of financial strain of the individual receiving it."

The HRSA loan repayment program is open to graduating nurses and also to any registered nurse with loan debt. RNs working for any of Tennessee's four Regional Mental Health Institutes are eligible to apply.

The 2016 NURSE Corps Loan Repayment Program application is open through Feb. 25.

For information, including how to apply, visit: www.hrsa.gov/loanscholarships/repayment/

“Working in the RMHIs is a rewarding experience with the opportunity to not only help the individual whom you are caring for, but to help make systematic changes in the delivery of care throughout the state.”
Laura Young, Nurse Executive

Looking for a Career in Nursing?



Come work for The State of Tennessee! The State offers competitive benefits packages, pay increases based on performance, and a healthy amount of vacation days. Plus, we are a HRSA loan repayment site, so you can pay off your student debt!

Nurses can work in one of four Regional Mental Health Institutes across the state. Whether you are a recent grad or a seasoned pro, an RN or an LPN, if you have a heart to help people, we want to meet you!

TN Department of
**Mental Health &
Substance Abuse Services**

"I have been a nurse with the State for over 25 years. Come join a dedicated team and make a difference."
Kathy Sanchez, MTMHI Director of Nursing

For more information, check out the Career section on our website:
www.tn.gov/behavioral-health/section/careers